

# RURAL HEALTH CONNECT

Improving the Health of Rural Communities

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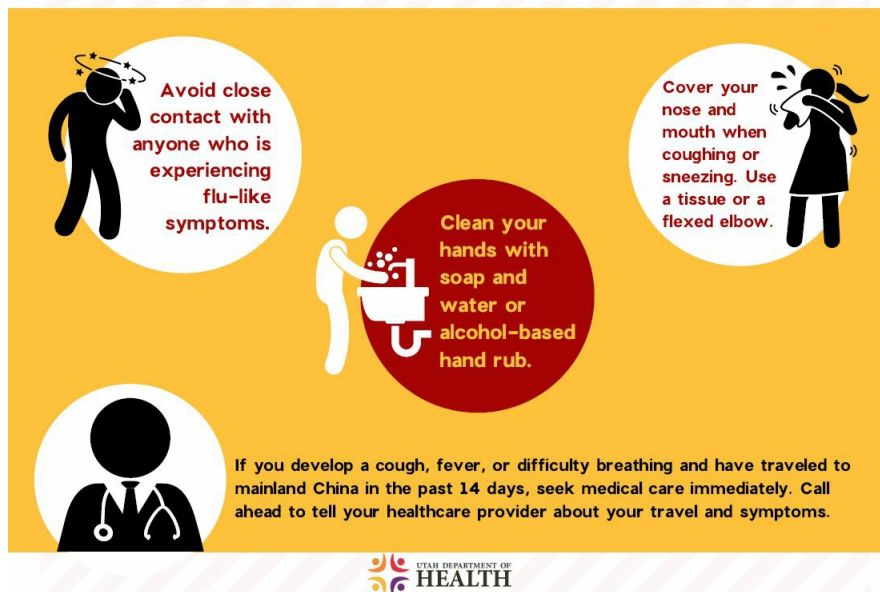
## Utah Department of Health COVID-19

We want to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting health facilities throughout rural Utah. Are you seeing an increase in service utilization? A decrease? Have you had to lay-off staff? Are support staff working from home? How have you been able to utilize telehealth services? Please send

responses to [opcrh@utah.gov](mailto:opcrh@utah.gov).

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Reduce Your Risk of Coronavirus



## What's New

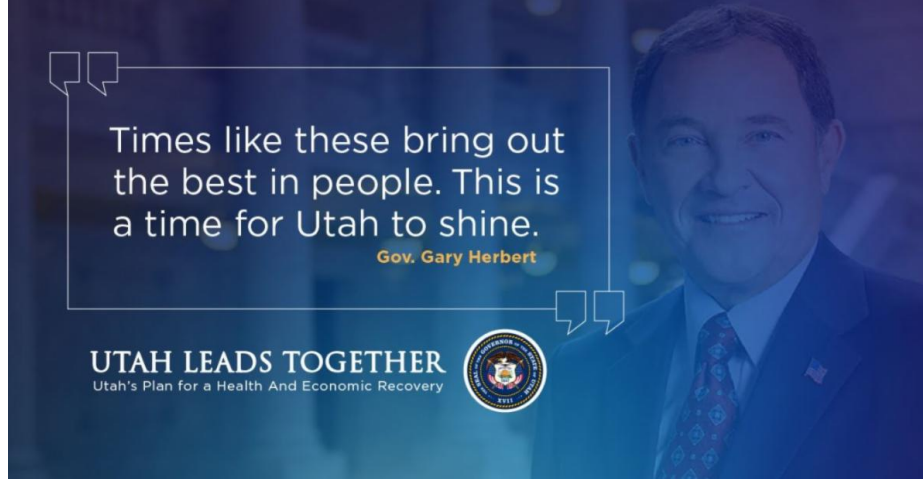
### Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Directive

"I would like to thank all Utahns who are already doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19. These efforts are making an impact. It is time for us to do more.

I expect all Utah residents and businesses to follow these directives. They are necessary to keep Utah residents safe during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. They will certainly result in disruptions to our lives, and that cannot be avoided. Those disruptions are a critical part of keeping ourselves safe. Following these directives now will avoid greater hardship later.

These directives establish minimum statewide standards. In consultation with the State, local authorities may impose more stringent directives and orders to address the unique situations in different areas of Utah. These directives are not to be confused with a shelter-in-place order. The following directives are in place until 11:59 p.m. on April 13, 2020."

To view the entire message, please click [here](#).



## The Utah Leads Together Plan

The Utah Leads Together economic response plan recognizes the value of facing uncertainty with a dynamic, data-informed, and unified plan. It gives structure and order, to what can otherwise be an unclear and difficult reality.

The plan conveys three phases of response: urgent, stabilization, and recovery. These phases help businesses correctly balance the health of employees with planning imperatives necessary for continuing operations. You can read the [whole plan](#) and a summary of the first phase on the [Resources for Business](#) page.

The time estimates of the phases give businesses the ability to set concrete objectives during a period of uncertainty. The time horizons give employees of those businesses confidence for a return to normal work and household patterns. Stability from directionally correct plans forms the basis of our economic recovery.

## CARES Act

The President has signed the \$2 trillion dollar economic relief package, known as the CARES Act. Here are a few of the key items in the relief package:

- \$300 billion in direct payments to Americans of \$1,200 or less, per person, depending on income level. Families could also receive payments of \$500 per child.
- \$260 billion to aggressively scale up the unemployment insurance program, expanding coverage to four months and raise the weekly benefit by \$600. Cover nontraditional workers, including the self-employed, freelancers and those working in the gig economy.
- An estimated \$500 billion in loans and other money for major industries. The provision comes with some strings attached, banning use of the funds toward stock buybacks, CEO pay boosts and other requirements.
- \$100 billion to hospitals responding to the COVID-19 to boost equipment and treatment.

To view the bill in its entirety, [please follow the link here](#).

To view the NPR article covering the bill, [please follow the link here](#).

## 2020 NHSC Scholarship Program

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) released the 2020 Application and Program Guidance for the [NHSC Scholarship Program](#). The application cycle closes Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 7:30 PM ET.

The NHSC Scholarship Program provides scholarships to health profession students pursuing careers as primary care providers in exchange for their commitment to serve in high-need, underserved communities. The scholarship includes tax-free payment of tuition, required fees, other reasonable educational costs, and a taxable monthly living stipend.

After completion of graduation/training, recipients fulfill their service commitment at one of more than 20,000 NHSC-approved sites throughout the nation and its territories. Each scholar serves for a minimum of two years and receives one year of financial support (up to four years) for each year of service at an NHSC-approved site found on the [Health Workforce Connector](#).

## Extended: HRSA's Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program (OIFSP)

HRSA understands the COVID-19 outbreak will have a direct impact on the preparation of grant applications. **As a result, the application cycle for OIFSP will now remain open through *April 27, 2020*.**

The purpose of the [Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program](#) (OIFSP) is to support training programs to expand the number of peer support specialists and other behavioral health-related paraprofessionals who are trained to work in integrated, interprofessional teams providing services to children whose parents are impacted by opioid use disorders and other substance use disorders, and their family members who are in guardianship roles.

Eligible applicants are State-licensed mental health nonprofit and for-profit organizations. For the purpose of this NOFO, these organizations may include academic institutions, including universities, community colleges and technical schools, which must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

HRSA expects approximately \$11,500,000 to be available in FY 2020 to fund an estimated 19 awards.

[Apply for this grant on Grants.gov.](#)

## United States 2020 Census

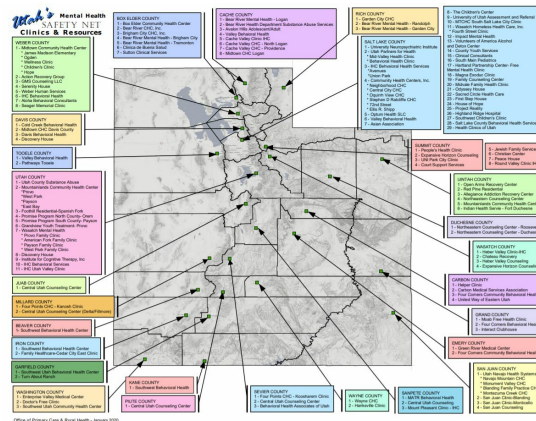
Between March 12 and March 20, invitations to participate in the 2020

Census arrived households across the country. Below are a list of important dates to note during the process of census taking:

- **March 26-April 3:** Reminder postcards will be delivered to households that have not responded.
- **April 8-16:** Reminder letters and paper questionnaires will be delivered to remaining households that have not responded.
- **April 20-27:** Final reminder postcards will be delivered to households that have not yet responded before census takers follow up in person.
- **May 13-July 31:** If a household does not respond to any of the invitations, a census taker will follow up in person.

## OPCRH Office Highlight:

Each month the OPCRH team highlights a significant event or project in our office. This month, we're highlighting our [Mental Health Safety Net Map](#) for the state of Utah! The Mental Health Safety Net Map is a newly developed map, if you have any suggestions or edits, please forward them to [coltongordon@utah.gov](mailto:coltongordon@utah.gov).



## Upcoming Events

### Rural Health Association Conference

*UPDATE: Online Webinar*

*"Building Partnerships for Rural Well-Being"*

The well-being of communities and individuals is complex and requires collaboration through effective partnerships that address multiple factors that affect health such as, social, financial, and environmental.





Rural communities have unique challenges, yet great opportunities, to foster partnerships and collaborations for improved health and well-being.

Hospitals, clinics, and providers often need community resources to support their patients to improve health. Some examples include: pre-diabetes and diabetes education, opioid dependency resources, access to fresh fruits and vegetables, or physical activity and social connections. This conference will address how to connect community resources, engage the community at large, and develop effective partnerships.

[To view the Rural Health Association of Utah's new conference format, please follow the link here.](#)

## OPCRH Program Updates

### HEALTH SYSTEMS SUPPORT

- **Save the Date: *April 9, 2020 CANCELLED.*** OPCRH is working with our partners to find another suitable time for the workshop. The workshop is for **Rural Health Clinics** and will cover survey preparedness, billing, and coding.
- **Save the Date: *June 11-12, 2020*** the OPCRH is hosting our annual **FLEX Summit** at Ruby's Inn in Bryce Canyon, UT. **Please look for updates as COVID-19 policies change.**
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- **Funding Opportunity:** The Rural Veterans Health Access Program is releasing two, \$25,000.00 Sub-grants for rural organizations. For more information, please follow the link here.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- The State Primary Care Grant Program application cycle opens ***April 1, 2020.*** The application submission process has changed, please be aware. To submit an application, please follow the link [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Robbin Williams at [robbinwilliams@utah.gov](mailto:robbinwilliams@utah.gov).
- **Announcement:** The **Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program** received no funding for the 2nd year in a row.
- The OPCRH is establishing a **Health Workforce Coalition** to develop a coordinated approach to addressing health workforce issues in rural and underserved Utah. The first coalition meeting will be ***rescheduled from March 26, 2020 to a later date*** and will focus on the root causes of health workforce shortages, identify emerging issues affecting Utah's health workforce, and share successful models and opportunities to scale

them. Members may include government, health industry, education institutions, and associated organizations. We are still in the process of reaching out to potentially interested stakeholders. If you would like to participate or learn more about this initiative, please contact **Ashley Moretz**, OPCRH Director, at [amoretz@utah.gov](mailto:amoretz@utah.gov)

## Statewide Announcements

### Patients May Now Get Medical Cannabis with Recommendation Letters

The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) announced changes to the Utah Medical Cannabis Program which will allow more patients access to medical cannabis. Under House Bill 425, passed during the 2020 Utah Legislative Session, qualifying patients who do not have a medical cannabis card but have a "recommendation letter" from their medical provider may purchase medical cannabis until December 31, 2020. Prior to this legislation, patients could only purchase medical cannabis with a medical cannabis card.

To qualify to purchase medical cannabis with a recommendation letter, individuals must meet the following requirements:

1. Live in Utah.
2. Present a recommendation letter to the medical cannabis pharmacy from a licensed medical professional that states you have been diagnosed with a qualifying condition. Approved licensed medical professions in Utah include a medical doctor, osteopathic physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant.
3. The medical cannabis pharmacy must receive independent confirmation from the individual's medical provider that the recommendation letter is valid.
4. Present a valid form of photo identification to the medical cannabis pharmacy such as a drivers license, a United States passport or passport card, or a United States military identification card.

### WIC Assistance is Available to All Who Meet Income Eligibility

Many immigrants in Utah are questioning how recent changes to the public charge rule will affect their families. WIC, the supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, is NOT included in the final public charge rule. Pregnant women, newborns and children up to the age of 5 may fully participate in the WIC program regardless of

immigration or citizenship status.

For more than four decades, WIC has provided early and targeted nutrition for women and children. WIC compliments efforts by SNAP and Medicaid to ensure healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes and early child development. When families lose access to these programs, children lose access to preventative health measures that can mitigate significant health conditions or poor health later in life. WIC provides eligible participants with nutrition support and resources that improve health outcomes.

People currently on WIC should continue participation. People who were on WIC in the past can reapply. And people who have not previously received WIC benefits can sign up without fear of negative consequence. The final rule clarifies that WIC participation will not be considered in a public charge determination conducted in the United States, even though other vital programs like SNAP and Medicaid are affected. The final rule does not permit public charge consideration of Medicaid benefits if the immigrant is under 21 years of age, or a pregnant woman (including a postpartum period of 60 days). WIC clinics and agencies do not inquire or collect information about a participant's immigration or citizenship status. In compliance with federal regulations, they do not share any personal information with outside agencies, including immigration authorities. Refugees, asylees, and VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) self-petitioners are protected and not subject to public charge determinations. Utah WIC welcomes all community members and their families. Everyone in Utah may use WIC services regardless of immigration status and without fear of it being held against you.

For more information visit the National WIC Association website or call 1-877-WIC-KIDS to speak to someone locally.

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## Webinars

### Free rural health COVID-19 "Call First" Communications Toolkit



As rural health leaders, you've been working diligently on communications regarding important issues such as social distancing, handwashing and overall messaging around practices to flatten the curve. An additional concern is taking all steps possible to not overburden our rural health facilities, while demonstrating leadership in our communities to promote a sense of vigilance, but also



an environment of security and calmness.

In this spirit, NRHA through donated services of partner Legato Healthcare Marketing, is providing NRHA members free access to a communications toolkit with messaging focused on:

- Calling first to determine if you should be seen
- The leadership role your hospital/clinic is taking to protect your community

Toolkit components – designed to allow customization and branding for your facility – include items such as print and digital ads, radio scripts, social media posts and media materials. Legato is donating its services not only for the production and use of these materials, based on CDC messaging and input from a rural health taskforce, but also for complimentary assistance in helping to download materials. [Visit here](#). When entering this site, you will be asked to provide your email so that updates to the toolkit can be sent to you immediately, allowing you to respond promptly to this ever-changing situation.

[To register, please follow the link here.](#)

## COVID-19 Toolkit for Rural Facilities

As leaders in rural healthcare, we recognize how critical it is for you to protect your care teams and the patients in your community amid the COVID-19 crisis.

In response, CPSI, through our family of companies is pleased to share that we are offering, **free of charge**, a set of tools to assist all rural hospitals and community providers with [COVID-19 readiness](#) along with a comprehensive telehealth solution that goes beyond COVID-19. That offering is expected to be available by the end of April 2020.

For more information on how your healthcare facility can take advantage of these telehealth tools, email us at [info@cpsi.com](mailto:info@cpsi.com)

[To access the toolkit, please follow the link here.](#)



# Dissemination of Rural Health Research: A Toolkit

The emphasis of knowledge translation is to ensure health providers, consumers, researchers, advocates, and policymakers are aware of, can access, and are able to use health research findings to inform decision-making. Differences among audiences make it imperative to know when and how to utilize various modes of dissemination for health research.

This toolkit aims to assist researchers with step four in the knowledge translation process, reaching their target audiences. By developing appropriate, timely, accessible, and applicable products, researchers have the opportunity to inform step five, a change in policy or practice. This toolkit provides descriptions for multiple modes of dissemination and includes discussions of the purpose of each product, which product is appropriate given the topic and audience, and how to develop each. Effective examples are also provided.

[To access the toolkit, please follow the link here.](#)

## Rural Suicide Prevention Toolkit

The Rural Suicide Prevention Toolkit compiles evidence-based and promising models and resources to support organizations implementing suicide prevention programs in rural communities across the United States. The modules in the toolkit contain resources and information focused on developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining rural suicide prevention programs. There are more resources on general community health strategies available in the [Rural Community Health Toolkit](#).

[To access the toolkit, please follow the link here.](#)



# Utah Medical Cannabis Program 4-Hr Required Course



This course introduces the endocannabinoid system and its interaction with the components of the cannabis plant, and addresses administration, therapeutic use, drug metabolism, physiologic and cognitive effects, potential risks, and drug interactions.

The use of marijuana in obstetric patients, pediatric patients, adolescent patients, and elderly patients is discussed in detail. In addition, the health effects of marijuana and cannabinoids in epilepsy are reviewed. Important considerations for patients with ischemic heart disease, hepatic disease, psychotic illness, and those with a history of drug dependence are provided.

This course also informs the reader about the legal and medical considerations in the recommendation of medical marijuana, and addresses the parts of H.B. 3001, including the Utah Medical Cannabis Act, that would be of interest to a Utah healthcare provider.

For more information about the course, please follow the link [here](#).

## Funding Opportunities

Please check our website for updated funding opportunities. You can find the table by following the link [here](#).

## National Organizations

[Human Services to Support Rural Health](#)

[Oral Health in Rural Communities](#)

[Overdose Data to Action \(RFA-CE19-1904\)](#)



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The OPCRH provides support to our stakeholders and clients in the form of hands-on support, economic impact analysis, research, community health needs assessments, and healthcare workforce needs assessment. We also provide technical assistance and pertinent information on student loan repayment programs and grant opportunities

If you would like to be a part of our newsletter in the future and/or would like to submit a success story, announcement, or communicate any other information to us or your rural health partners, please contact Colton Gordon Program Specialist 801-230-6570, [coltongordon@utah.gov](mailto:coltongordon@utah.gov)

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